



Department of Justice

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FIVE INDICTED IN AUTO THEFT CONSPIRACY THAT ALLEGEDLY NETTED MORE THAN 80 VEHICLES WORTH IN EXCESS OF \$1 MILLION

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS - Tommy L. Thompson, Jr., 48, Indianapolis, Christopher Wells, 45, Indianapolis, Francis W. Coleman, 41, Laurel, Maryland, Carl E. McCreary, 48, Frisco City, Alabama, and Fred D. Bear, Jr., 39, Avon, Ind. were indicted in connection with an auto theft ring that allegedly stole more than 80 vehicles valued in excess of \$1 million dollars. This indictment follows their arrests on December 28, 2009 on a complaint filed in district court.

This indictment is the result of a seven-months long investigation by the United States Secret Service and the Indiana State Police with assistance by the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Greenfield Police Department, Shelbyville Police Department, Lawrence Police Department, Muncie Police Department, Greensburg Police Department, Fishers Police Department, Clarksville Police Department, Kokomo Police Department, Brownsburg Police Department, Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department and the Alabama Department of Safety and Alabama Bureau of Investigation.

The indictment alleges that in June 2006, Christopher Wells and Francis Coleman entered into an agreement to steal motor vehicles and use counterfeit motor vehicle titles and counterfeit vehicle identification numbers to fool state title authorities into thinking the stolen vehicles were not stolen, and could be legally sold. Wells and Coleman were purportedly joined by Thompson and McCreary in or about April of 2007, and all four participated until their arrest on December 29, 2009. Bear allegedly participated from March 2008 through September 2009. In furtherance of this scheme, the defendants utilized the United States Postal Service and Federal Express to send and receive the counterfeit documents.

According to the indictment, Coleman, Wells, Thompson, and others would steal motor vehicles from both within and outside of the Southern District of Indiana. They would then

would locate vehicles of an identical make and model in Canada and copy those vehicles' vehicle identification number (VIN). Coleman would create counterfeit Washington, D.C. or North Carolina motor vehicle titles and VIN stickers bearing the Canadian vehicles' information. Coleman would then either drive or ship the counterfeit documents to Wells in Indianapolis, where Wells, Thompson, and others would clone the vehicles. After the vehicles were cloned, either Bear or McCreary would receive the vehicles for sale.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Bradley P. Shepard, who is prosecuting the case for the government, all are charged with Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud and each faces a maximum of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Thompson remains in custody, the remaining defendants are on pre-trial release.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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